

(1) What Collection requirements were issued to the field with regard to Kennedy's assassination?

As soon as the name of Lee OSWALD was mentioned in connection with the assassination of President Kennedy on 22 November. CIA file checks were begun and the Mexico City Station was asked by cable for more information on OSWALD. Within a week twenty-seven cabled reports had been sent to the White House, the Department of State, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

CIA field stations provided bits of information during the week after the assassination. The Mexico City Station reviewed the transcripts of its telephone taps and came up with several more conversations probably involving OSWALD, but not actually mentioning him by name; these transcripts connected him also to the Cuban Consulate in Mexico City. Several Mexicans were arrested and questioned about his activities, giving a good picture of what he was really up to. A host of fabricators, some anonymous, bombarded overseas embassies with spurious tips on the case. All of these leads were soon discredited, but they were still coming in.

In light of OSWALD's defection to the Soviet Union where he had remained for almost three years and his trip to Mexico City where he had contact with members of the Cuban and Soviet Consulates, the possibility that OSWALD had not acted upon his own but may have been an agent in a plot under foreign direction could not be dismissed without exhaustive exploitation of all available foreign assets.

As the Agency responsible for the collection of foreign counterintelligence information, it was the Agency's responsibility to support the Federal Bureau of Investigation in its investigation of the President's assassination by

a. Obtaining detailed information on every aspect of OSWALD's activities and movements abroad;

b. Studying this information in light of the Agency's knowledge of the mission and operations of foreign intelligence services - particularly the Cuban and Soviet services, and

c. Making available to the FBI and other appropriate government agencies and departments, all information obtained on OSWALD or pertaining to his contacts with Cuban and Soviet officials and organizations abroad.

Set out below are those actions taken by the Agency after learning the identity of the assassin and during the weeks immediately following the President's death.

Specific Action Taken by the Agency

On the same day as the assassination, 22 November 1963, the Deputy Director, Plans, Richard HELMS, sent a cable book message to all CIA Stations abroad. HELMS stated that the "tragic death of President Kennedy requires all of us to look sharp for any unusual intelligence developments. Although we have no reason to expect anything of a particular military nature," all hands should be on the quick alert at least for the next few days while the new President takes over." [DIR 84608]

On 22 November, the Chief of WH/3, in response to an earlier cable from Mexico City in which the latter directed Headquarters' attention to previous traffic relating to Lee Harvey OSWALD [MEXI-7014 (IN 66781), 22 November 1963], asked the Station to follow and report on Soviet Embassy activity and reaction "during these hours" [DIR 84802]

On 23 November, CI Staff requested the Mexico City Station to review all audio tapes and transcripts since 27 September to locate material possibly pertinent to OSWALD. [DIR 84886 in reference to MEXI-6453 (IN 36017), 9 October 1963.]

On the same day, Chief, WH/3, asked Mexico City Station to cable verbatim transcripts in English of all OSWALD intercepts and other material relating to him. [DIR 84914]

On 24 November, Chief, WH/3, asked the Mexico City Station's opinion as to why OSWALD was in Mexico in September-October 1963. [DIR 84920]

On 25 November, Chief, WH/3, asked Mexico City Station to

a synopsis for COS background briefings to assist in the evaluation of any operational leads generated by the investigation.

[DIR 85817]

A second cable was sent out on the same day to Frankfurt and The Hague asking for evidence of travel of Lee OSWALD and his Russian-born wife during their return to the United States during May and June 1962. [DIR 85973]

On 2 December, headquarters sent a priority cable to Berlin, Bonn, Frankfurt, and The Hague asking for confirmatory information relating to the travel of OSWALD, his wife, and oldest child on their return from the Soviet Union (in 1962) to the United States. [DIR 86077].

On 12 December 1963, Chief, WH/3, asked Mexico City Station to continue to watch for Soviet and Cuban reaction to the investigation of the President's assassination, evidence of their complicity, and signs that they were putting out propaganda about the case. Mention was made that Soviet intelligence officers in India had letters sent to American leaders demanding a full investigation of the assassination. [DIR 88680]

cable a summary of all the Station's information relating to Silvia DURAN (Mexican employee of the Cuban Consulate, Mexico City).

[DIR 84926]

On the same day, Chief, WH/3, asked the Mexico City Station for any information indicating that OSWALD may have entered Mexico at any time other than during the period 26 September to 5 October.

[DIR 84938]

On 26 November 1963, Headquarters sent a priority cable to Brussels, ¹⁴⁻⁶(Copenhagen), ¹⁴⁻¹(Helsinki), London, Madrid, ¹⁴⁻⁴(Oslo), Ottawa, Paris, Rome, and The Hague requesting station and ²⁴(liaison) traces on Lee Harvey OSWALD. [DIR 85133]

On 28 November 1963, Chief, WH/3, stressed in a cable to the Mexico City Station that "there should be no let down in your effort to follow all leads and investigate all facts which bear on this case. We have by no means excluded the possibility that other as yet unknown persons may have been involved or even that other powers may have played a role." Chief, WH/3 added the request "Please continue all your coverage of Soviet and Cuban installations and your liaison with Mexicans." [DIR 85655]

On 29 November, Headquarters forwarded a book cable to Copenhagen, Helsinki, London, Oslo, and The Hague, which included

(2) What follow-up of these requirements was there during 1964?

(3) What form did the follow-up take?

The initial response to headquarters' requirements levied on the field, after the assassination of the President, has been treated under Question (1) above. As this information was received in Headquarters it was compared with existing information, if any, synthesized, analyzed, and then made available to the White House, the Department of State, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Copies of these disseminations were also forwarded to the Secret Service.

Headquarters examined all new leads sent in by the field, offering guidance, and, when necessary, coordinating with the appropriate United States government agency - primarily the FBI - when the investigation involved an American citizen. Most, if not all, leads originating in the field were persons claiming to have knowledge of OSWALD or his wife. Investigation revealed that the majority of these leads were fabricators.

In light of the urgency of the investigation being conducted by the FBI, all correspondence between Agency Headquarters and its field units was in cable form. If necessary, messages could be passed by telephone.

Agency field representatives in the Mexico City Station and the Miami Base worked closely with the local FBI representative keeping the latter continually apprised of all information pertaining to the investigation as it became available to the Station.

The Mexico City Station and Miami Base were able to respond immediately to requirements levied by the local FBI representative. The field reported to Headquarters on all information passed in the field to the FBI or received from the FBI representative so that Headquarters could make a formal dissemination to the appropriate government agency or department in Washington.

(4) Identify and describe the records with regard to this activity.

The material relating to Lee Harvey OSWALD (internal Agency documents, reports to and from other government agencies and departments, correspondence with the Warren Commission, etc.) is held in the Agency's official file on OSWALD. The official file no. 201-289248 is held by the CI Staff and comprises 57 volumes, i.e., well over 200 separate file folders and envelopes. In addition to the official file, there are ancillary files covering various aspects of the investigation and later developments - FOIA requests for information, documents (copies) cleared for release in response to such requests, the Rockefeller Commission, etc.

A machine index of the material held in the official file reaches a total of 1829 ~~documents~~ or entries. There is some duplication and omissions. It is not possible to tell from the machine index the subject of many of the documents, particularly cables, nor is it possible to ascertain the original of many of the documents appearing under those entries marked XAAZ-.

See the attached list of files and folders reviewed to date.